

112TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. RES. 637

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the release of information with respect to the 1940 decennial census is a cause for celebration, that the National Archives and Records Administration and the Bureau of the Census should be commended for maintaining custody of such information, and that the citizens of the United States should use such information to learn about their family history.

---

## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 27, 2012

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois (for himself and Mr. GOWDY) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

---

## RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the release of information with respect to the 1940 decennial census is a cause for celebration, that the National Archives and Records Administration and the Bureau of the Census should be commended for maintaining custody of such information, and that the citizens of the United States should use such information to learn about their family history.

Whereas Article I, Section 2, of the Constitution of the United States calls for an enumeration of the United States population every 10 years;

Whereas the first decennial census was conducted in 1790;

Whereas the law prohibits the release of information about an individual to any other individual or agency until 72 years after such information is collected for the decennial census;

Whereas the National Archives and Records Administration will release records from the 1940 Census;

Whereas the 1940 decennial census included the first question about income and was the first census of housing, with enumerators collecting information for a housing census at the same time they gathered information for the population census;

Whereas the 1940 decennial census was the last census conducted prior to the United States entering World War II in 1941;

Whereas the 1940 decennial census followed the Great Depression and documented the hardships Americans lived through in the Great Depression, including—

(1) that more than 15 percent of the labor force was unemployed (for the week of March 24th, 1940);

(2) that the birth rate dropped to 18 infants for each 1,000 citizens in 1940 from 25 infants for each 1,000 citizens in 1915;

(3) that there was a drop in immigration into the United States, a decline influenced by the economic conditions of the 1930s; the foreign-born population of the United States stood at 14,204,149 in 1930 but had fallen to 11,594,896 in 1940;

(4) that home ownership declined from 48 percent in 1930 to a little less than 44 percent in 1940; and

(5) that, in terms of housing, 9,000,000 homes lacked running water, 13,000,000 homes had outside toilets or none at all, and 14,000,000 homes had no bath

facilities; in total, 15,800,000 homes in the United States lacked some portion of complete plumbing;

Whereas the release of 1940 decennial census records shows us how our society has changed over the past 72 years, including—

(1) that the 1940 decennial census counted 132,200,000 people and by 2010 the population had grown to 308,700,000 people;

(2) that in 2010, housing units numbered 131,700,000, compared with 37,200,000 in 1940;

(3) that in 1940, the most populous state was New York, with a population of 13,500,000, and that Pennsylvania, Illinois, Ohio, and California rounded out the top five most populous States; in 2010, the most populous state was California, with a population of 37,300,000, and Texas, New York, Florida, and Illinois followed;

(4) that while only 5 percent of adults had a bachelor's degree in 1940, 28 percent had such a degree in 2010;

(5) that in 1940, 89.8 percent of the country reported their race as White and 9.8 percent as Black, but, in 2010, 72.4 percent reported as single-race White and 12.6 percent as single-race Black; and

(6) that in 1940, the median annual earnings for men and women were \$956 and \$592, respectively, but, in 2010, they were \$47,715 and \$36,931, respectively; and

Whereas since the first decennial census in 1790, statistics and information about our Nation and its people have been available to everyone and are an enduring part of our democracy and way of life: Now, therefore, be it

1       *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

1           (1) acknowledges the historical significance of  
2     April 2, 2012, for the release of the 1940 decennial  
3     census records;

4           (2) commends the National Archives and  
5     Records Administration and the Bureau of the Cen-  
6     sus for the collection and maintenance of these vital  
7     historical records; and

8           (3) encourages the people of the United States  
9     to research their family history in the 1940 decen-  
10    nial census records.

○